



**County of Los Angeles**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
425 Shatto Place -- Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 361-5602

DAVID SANDERS, PH.D.  
Director

**Board of Supervisors**

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January 12, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro-Tem  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: David Sanders, Ph.D.   
Director

**DECEMBER 6, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #16 RE: MISSING CHILDREN**

**INTRODUCTION**

On December 6, 2005, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reconvene the "Missing Children Task Force" in order to continue in the identification and refinement of practices for the prevention and recovery of runaways; and to report back on a monthly basis on planned and implemented practices to better serve children who have run away or have the potential to run away from out-of-home-care. The monthly reports should include the status of:

- I. Existing Countywide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide;
- II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website to enable the provision of quality information on missing children related to numbers, demographics, and information that will evidence progress in both the prevention and recovering of missing children;
- III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline's 24 hours/7 days per week ability to provide specialized support to DCFS in the screening and appropriate referral of calls it received regarding missing children;
- IV. Consideration of using the resources that will support the Countywide expansion of the Permanency Partners Program (P-3) to locate and plan for the permanency of runaway youth, and;
- V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by those young people who have run away with valid suggestions, corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.



## **CURRENT STATUS**

The following is a report of activities that have occurred toward addressing the above issues to date:

1. DCFS completed a thorough comprehensive reconciliation of the number of children currently missing, whether due to runaway or abduction. As of December 20, 2005, DCFS is tracking a total of 505 children missing from care: 309 children (61%) reported to be runaways; 196 children (39%) reported to be abducted. Of the 309 runaways, 209 children (68%) are ages 16 to 17; 91 children (29%) are ages 13 to 15; and 9 children (3%) are ages 12 and under (see attached). In addition, there are 119 individuals who are 18 or older who remain dependents of the Juvenile Court that have chosen to leave placement.

Information on missing children will be updated regularly and reported to the Board in the directed monthly reports, which will serve as a baseline to monitor the Department's progress in recovery and will measure the successes of the implemented strategies to reduce the number of missing children from our care.

2. DCFS is in the process of reconvening the Missing Children Task Force by forwarding invitations to Task Force members. It is anticipated that the first meeting will take place in January 2006, during which members will review the previous recommendations; the directives of the current Board motion; as well as issues, strategies and solutions to address the problem of children missing from care, as follows:
  - DCFS has completed a comprehensive review of the minutes from previous meetings of the "Missing Children's Task Force," which include co-location of DCFS with Law Enforcement; developing service strategies to prevent children from becoming chronic runaways; ensuring regular maintenance of current digital pictures of children in DCFS case files; considering warrant recall hearings that require an appearance of the child at Juvenile Court to ensure that the child understands he/she is valued; specialized training all staff working with this population of children; and developing a multi-disciplinary approach.
  - As part of the initial reconvened Task Force meeting, DCFS plans to review all previous recommendations, particularly those that relate to improving the existing missing children web-site; discussing enhancement of the DCFS/Law Enforcement protocol to address locating missing children; and developing collaborative training to effectively respond to this population of youth.
3. On December 6, 2005, DCFS issued a "For Your Information" (FYI) policy bulletin to all staff regarding Runaway and Child Abduction Procedures. The FYI informs staff that "it is departmental policy that when a child runs away from a placement, the case-carrying CSW will make all diligent efforts to locate the child on an ongoing basis until the child is located



or court jurisdiction is terminated;" and reminds staff of their step-by-step responsibilities when a child runs away or is abducted.

Additionally, in accordance with your Board's directive to consider using the resources that will support the Countywide expansion of the Permanency Partners Program (P3) to locate and plan for the permanency of runaway youth, effective immediately, for all new instances of children who run away from placement, the FYI directs all social work staff to initiate a referral to the P3 program for assistance in locating and stabilizing the child in a permanent placement. Furthermore, all children who are current runaways from placement are being referred to P3. Upon referral, P3 CSWs will assist case-carrying CSWs in locating children, stabilizing placements, and providing enhanced permanency planning services. Locating children who run away from their parents homes will continue to be a top priority of their case carrying CSW.

4. During the month of December, 2005, DCFS was very pleased to have successfully employed a collaborative approach whereby various departmental resources, including P3, Street Outreach Services (SOS), Adoption Safe Family Act (placement assessment unit), Emergency Response Command Post, and regional staff coordinated efforts that led to the safe recovery of a 16-year-old youth who eloquently addressed your Board on December 16, 2005. These successful strategies will be replicated to recover additional youth; and DCFS looks forward to the opportunity to consider all valid suggestions made by recovered youth to address the unique needs of this population.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Department of Children and Family Services thanks the Board for its attention to this very serious matter. The Department will continue to regularly review and direct resources and activities to provide services to troubled youth that will encourage them to remain in a safe environment as a preventive measure instead of running away, or to encourage them to return to a placement that will provide them with needed services and safely stabilize a permanent plan for them. In future monthly reports we will continue to provide you with updates on any efforts to address this very important population of children in our care.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact me or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

DS:TP:pc

Attachments

c: Chief Administrative Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors



Department of Children and Family Services  
Runaway Report

As of December 20 2005

SPA	OFFICE	TOTAL	AGE				SVC COMP				MULTIPLE EVENTS					LENGTH OF TIME AWOL				NR			
			<=12	13-15	16-17	18+	ER	FW	FR	PP	NR	0-1	2-3	4-5	6+	<2Wk	<1Mo	<3Mo	<1Yr		>1Yr		
Service Bureau 3	Lancaster	13	0	2	5				5	8		10	2	1					9	2	2		
	Palmdale	11		2	4			0	4	7		9	2	0				0	3	3	4	0	
	Total	24																					
	NR																						
2	N Hollywood	23	2	6	7			1	8	7	6	8	4	1	3	8		1	0	10	4	2	4
	Santa Clarita	10		3	5				2	8		8	2	0	2			0	1	7	1	1	
	Total	32																					
	NR																						
3	Glendora	42	2	7	22		3	3	8	28		35	2	3	1			0	2	17	11	8	3
	Pasadena	15	0	0	9		1	1	1	13		12	2	1	0			0	0	4	4	8	1
	Pomona	18		2	10		2	3	13			11	5	1	1			0	1	11	3	3	0
	Total	75																					
Service Bureau 2	NR																						
	NR																						
	NR																						
	NR																						
4	Metro North	48		14	22			4	14	31		36	8	2	4			1	13	19	9	8	1
	Total	48																					
	NR																						
	NR																						
5	West LA	3	2		1			1		2		3						0					3
	Total	3																					
	NR																						
	NR																						
6	Century	18	0	6	7		1	1	3	14		13	3	2	1			0	1	9	5	4	0
	Compton	30		10	16		7	8	20			0	0	0	0			0	4	27	3	2	0
	MART	0	0					0				0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	48																					
Newhome	NR	14		3	5		0	0	4	10		0	0	0	0			0	1	2	4	0	3
	Westridge	40	0	8	20		1	2	11	28		26	13	0	1			0	2	20	10	6	2
	Total	100																					
	NR																						
Service Bureau 1	NR																						
	NR																						
	NR																						
	NR																						
7	Behndere	30	0	7	16		0	2	6	22		23	5	2	0			0	3	10	9	4	4
	Latino Family	1		1			1					1	0	0	0			0	0	1	0	0	0
	S F Springs	38	1	8	25		3	6	30			24	5	8	0			1	1	14	7	6	8
	Total	69																					
8	La Habra	37	1	9	19		1	1	11	24		31	4	2	0			0	3	20	5	6	3
	Torrance	17		5	7			6	11			11	4	1	1			0	1	10	3	3	0
	Total	54																					
	NR																						
ADP	Adoption	2	0	1	1					2		1	1	0	0			0	0	0	1	0	1
	Total	2																					
	NR																						
	NR																						
Specialized Programs	NR																						
	NR																						
	NR																						
	NR																						
BSP	Comita - SP	6	1	1	2		0	0	2	4		6	0	0	0			0	0	1	1	4	0
	Willshire - SP	5		3			0	0	2	3		1	3	1	0			0	1	0	4	0	0
	Total	11																					
	NR																						
Grand Total	NR	428	8	91	200	118	6	28	102	283	8	289	65	20	9	65	3	34	194	88	70	33	5
	Total																						
	NR																						
	NR																						

Under 18 subjects 301

Under 18 subjects 308



## as of December 20th, 2005

[illegible]